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Languages



Elementary Principles of the Sheetswa Language.

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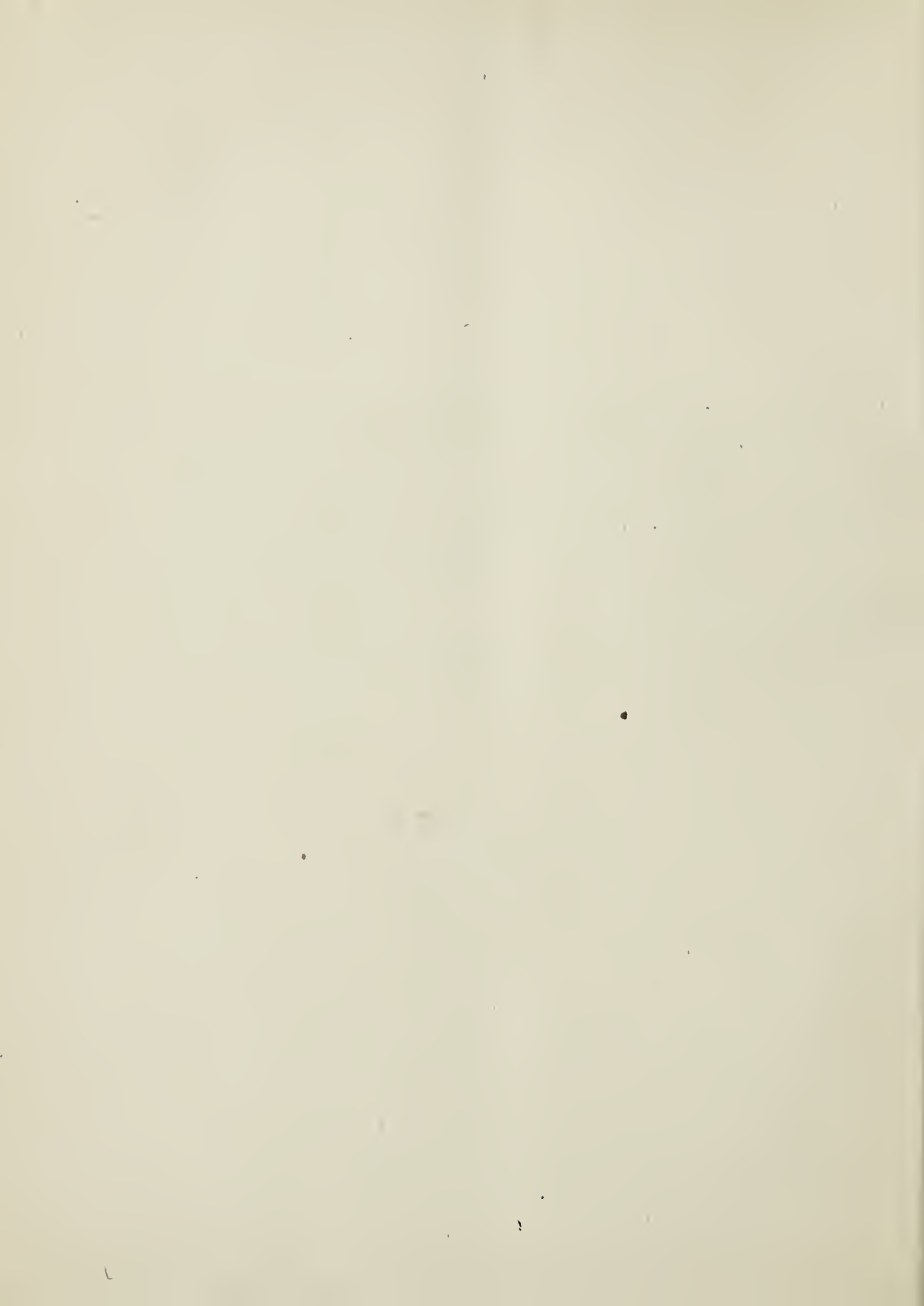
Note.

The following pages are hastily thrown together for the benefit of those who wish to begin immediately the study of the Sheetswa. This is our only apology for presenting this truly necessary work in so incomplete a form.

We are greatly indebted to the Rev. W. C. Wilcox for his Tonga -Sheetswa grammar, -which edition has long since been exhausted-, and also to the "First Lessons in Zulu", by Bishop Colenzo.

Our intention has been to supply simple information in a simple form, and for the present time.

E. H. R.



ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

of the

Sheetswa Language.

Introductory Note.

The Sheetswa language is one of the great family of languages which together are called "Bantu", or "The Bantu family",-because in nearly all of them the term for "person" is "batu", "vatu" or some very similar form. The Batswa people who speak the sheetswa language inhabit from the Limpopo River on the South to the Sabi River on the North, and are in the vast majority of population; other and very minor tribes relatively, being the Tonga and Machopa; the former inhabiting the near regions of Inhambane Bay, and the latter a small portion North of the Limpopo River along the sea coast. Other semi-tribes occur, being formed of inter-marriage with those already mentioned. The population of this district is probably not less than two millions of people, while several methods of estimating it would force it up to no less than three and a half millions. The Tongas most probably do not exceed fifty thousand, and the Machopa people cannot be far from the same number. The Gwamba people of Delagoa Bay regions speak a language so akin to Sheetswa that the Batswa can readily understand them, while the Tonga and Machopa are so dissimilar that the Batswa people can make nothing out of them. This entire District is under the Portuguese flag; and the native chiefs, which are marvelously abundant, are subject to Portuguese authority on all but merest minor points.

Orthography.

The alphabet which so far has been used is the same so far as the letters are concerned, as those in English, save the “q” which is altogether useless. There are five vowels, always long, and twenty consonants.

The Vowels.

a	as in the English word, father.
e.	” ” fete
i	” ” machine
o	” ” go
u	” ” moon.

The Consonants.

- b is not the hard English “b”; but a softened form approaching “v” and sometimes “w”. In “tiba” to know, “libati” door, “ribala” to forget, and some others it is nearly, but not quite v. Before “y” it is “bdgz” or “bdz” as “byela” to tell. etc.
- c is ch. As “caka” dirt. There are no exceptions.
- d before “l” is dhl, as “ndlela” path. etc.
- g is always hard.
- k before l is “khl” or “thl”, as “nklanu” five.
- n before “a” in “nanga,” is like “ng” in sing.
before “w” it is as “ng” in sing. “nwanana” son.
Except (a) in the passive of all verbs, save “kona” to condemn.

(b) “nwa” to drink, and “wunwa” to lie.

(c) in oblique cases where the nominative ends in “o”, as “bingano” oblique form, “binganweni” (boundary).

r is hr. There are no exceptions.

s before “w” in the adjective “swa” new, has the sound of “tsr” or “tswr” or “psr”. It is a difficult sound and foreigners are not agreed as to what would spell it.” It is only to be properly acquired from the native himself.

t before “r” is a difficult sound, somewhat like “psr” or “tsr.” As “trala” to bear.

x is sh. There are no exceptions. “xilo” thing.

z is a whistling “z” in all forms of the plurals of the fourth class, as “zilo” things, also in all adverbs, as “kanilezi” therefore etc.

Accent.

The accent is regularly on the penult.

Except (a) when the final vowel is changed to “o” for emphasis.

as “Tizoro” for “Tizore”. etc.

(b) The enclitic draws the accent forward, as “a ya”, “a ku”.

(c) There are a few monosyllabics which retain the accent.

As “nzu”, “bi”, “nwa”, etc.

Frequently the final vowel is so indistinctly spoken that the word may have the appearance of being accented.

on the ultima, but the elided vowel always reappears when followed by an enclitic, or some other form of the verb.

Example, "Cuwuka", may be herd as "Cuwuk".

But it is "Cuwukake" or "cuwukela",
when followed as above.

The letter "a" is often used almost if not quite in the sense of the definite article "the". It is clearly the indefinite article in many instances.

Example, A munhu wata. Literally, "man is coming"; but the "a" makes it, "A man is coming". However, the "a" may be inserted or omitted at pleasure, without interfering perceptibly with the meaning.

Classes of Nouns.

The Sheetswa, like kindred dialects of the Bantu family, has several classes of nouns, which are generally distinguished by their prefixes. These distinctions in class are not altogether arbitrary, although they may appear so in some classes.

The first class includes persons almost exclusively, but other nouns may occur, as in the case of some birds etc.

The third class contains for the most part collective nouns, as "flock", "sheep", etc.

The fourth class has more generally indefinite items, "thing", "animal", etc.

The ninth class contains all verbal nouns, and they are many.

The Prefix.

Each class of nouns is distinguished by its Prefix before the noun, followed by a Possessive Particle after the noun. But the prefixes of the first, fifth, and seventh classes, seldom if ever occur in the singular, while that of the second is as often omitted as used. They are always regular in the plural.

The possessive particles following each class are invariably regular, in both singular and plural.

Table of the Noun Classes.

Class	Singular			Plural		
	Pre- fix	noun	Poss. part.	Pre- fix	noun	Poss part.
1	u,i	munhu	wa	ba	banhu	ba
2	gi	tiko	ga	ma	matiko	ya
3	i	ivu	ya	ti	tiyivu	ta
4	xi	xihari	xa	zi	zihari	za
5	i	muzwa	wa	yi	mizwa	ya
6	li	limbambo	la	ti	timbambo	ta
7	i	byala	ga			
8	wu	wunga	wa			
9	ku	kuga	ka			

Cases of Nouns.

There is no change in the form of nouns in the nominative, possessive or objective cases. The objective case has a locative form, which we shall term the **Oblique Case**.

The Oblique case is formed by changing the final vowel;

if "a" or "e" into eni

if "i" into ini

if "o" , into "weni"

if "u", into "wini"

if "m" preceeds the final o or u, it is changed to "n" which before the "w" becomes "ng" in sound.

Example, "kuma" (ashes) "kumeni" (at, to, or in the ashes).

"ngohe" (face) "ngoheni" (on, or near to the face).

"hosi" (chief) "hosini" (at, to, or near to the chief).

"bito" (name) "bitweni" (in, with, or by the name).

"indlu" (house) "indlwini" (in, at, or by the house).

"homo" (ox) "nhonwini" (in, or to, or near to the ox).

"simu" (garden) "sinwini" (in, or at, or about the garden).

The particle "le" is often used after a personal pronoun either before the oblique case, as "ba le tilweni" (they of in heaven), or without the oblique form, as "ba le Mongwe" (they of Mongwe).

The particles "a" and "le" are used quite arbitrarily, adding but little to the meaning, and may be omitted or used at pleasure.

The Pronoun.

There are two forms of the personal pronoun, the simple, and the emphatic. The simple form is divided into the direct simple, and the progressive forms.

Either the simple or the progressive form is the subject of a verb, whether its antecedent is expressed or not.

As, "A munhu wa famba" (The man he goes, or The man he is going).

Table of Personal Pronouns.

	Per- son	Sim- ple	Pro- gressive	Em- phatic	Ob- jective	
Singular	1	Nzi	Nza	mina	nzi	I
	2	u	wa	wena	ku	you
	3	u,a, i	a	yena	mu	he
Plural	1	ha	ha	hina	hi	we
	2	mu	ma	nwina	mu	you
	3	ba	a	bona	ba	they

The objective case of the personal pronoun stands before the verb;

"Nzi ku ranza", I love you.

Progressive form, "Nza ku ranza". "I am loving you", and the condition continues.

The Possessive case is formed by changing the final vowel of the possessive particles to "a" which is always equivalent to "of" in the English;

"Indlu ya mina", the house of me, i. e. my house.

"Nhanyana" wa yena, the girl of him, i. e. his girl.

The Demonstrative Pronoun.

The demonstrative pronoun, though regular throughout, is difficult for foreigners.

It will be easily comprehended from the tables given.

There are two other forms which may be considered under this head, which in a complete grammar would naturally be classified separately. There is an adverbial form, designating direction, or distance, as “gaya” it there, or “it yonder”.

And there is also a form which is perhaps more emphatic in its relations than otherwise which differs from the simple form, as “yona” etc, it. These numerous forms are necessary because of the numerous classes of nouns.

Table of Demonstrative Pronouns.

Class	Noun	This	That	These	Those	It	Them	Yonder.
1	munhu	loyi	loye	laba	labo	yena	bona	gaya labaya.
2	tiko	legi	lego	laya	lawo	gona	wona	legiya lawaya.
3	ivu	leyi	leyo	leti	leto	yona	tona	leyiya letiya.
4	xihari	lexi	lexo	lezi	lezo	xona	zona	lexiya leziya.
5	muzwa	lowu	lowo	leyi	leyo	wona	yona	lowuya leyiya.
6	limbambo	lolu	jolo	leti	leto	lona	tona	loluya letiya.
7	byala	legi	lego	-	-	gona	-	legiya -
8	wunga	lowu	lowo	-	-	wona	-	lowuya -
9	kuga	loku	loko	-	-	kona	-	lokuya -

The Relative Pronoun.

The Relative Pronouns, Who, Which, That, and What, are the same in form as the Demonstratives, but they are followed by a form of the verb called the Relative Form. This is made by the addition of "ko" to the final vowel of the verb.

"Munhu loyi a fambako", the man who walks.

"Tiko lego nzi lo wulawulako ha gona", that country of which I was speaking.

(Literally, "that country of which I was speaking about it".)

The Adjective.

- 1 The number of words which are strictly adjectives is small. They regularly follow the nouns which they qualify -unlike the English-, and are governed by the possessive particle of the nouns to which they belong.

"Munhu wa ntima", a man of black, i. e. a black man.

"Tiyivu ta hombe", large sheep.

"Xilo xo haba", a worthless thing.

- 2 Regularly, all syllables end in a vowel; but when the syllable following begins with a vowel, there is naturally a coalition of the vowels, as "ga-oce" which becomes "goce"; or the insertion of some euphonic letter as "Ti-ivu" which becomes "Tiyivu".

Hence "oce", alone, and "onkle" all, conform to the rule, but have the appearance of having elided the vowel of the possessive particle preceeding them. in

the Personal pronoun, second person, both singular and plural, and the third person singular, these two adjectives take "e" instead of "o".

"U ta famba wece ke ?", Are you going alone ?

"Nwina nwenkle mu tsama kwatsi ke ? " Are you all well ?

"Xihari xonkle" all the wild animal.

- 3 "Nwe", one, "nwane," other, "nyingi," many, and "swa", new, have the objective form of the personal pronoun in the third person singular of nouns in the first class.

"Munhu munwe", one person.

"Banhu banwane", other people.

- 4 The paucity of adjectives is materially augmented by the use of a goodly number of verbs which express quality. These verbs are used in the infinitive form, and are governed by the regular possessive particle. The "k" of the infinitive is elided, when the "a" and "u" coalesce forming "o".

"A munhu wa kusaseka", becomes "A munhu wo saseka", a good man.

"A mufana wa ku-tira", becomes "A mufana wo tira", A boy of work. i. e. A working boy, or, work boy.

Comparison of Adjectives.

There is nothing corresponding to proper Comparison of Adjectives, as in English. A person or thing is large or small, sweet, old, etc, only in comparison with some other which has more or less of the same

quality. There are two ways in which comparison is expressed, viz, one is great, the other small, or this one surpasses that one.

“Mufana wa hombe, nhanyana u tsongwani”. The boy is large, the girl is small.

“Mufana wa hunza nhanyana”. The boy surpasses the girl.

The Superlative is expressed by the use of the adverb “nguvu”, much, or great.

“ivu leyi ya hombe nguvu”, this sheep is very large, i. e. is the largest sheep.

“Ivu leyi ya hunza tiyivu tonkle”, this sheep surpasses all, i. e. is the largest sheep.

The Numerals.

There are but seven names for numbers in the Sheet-swa language. All other numbers are a repetition, and, for large numbers, awkward and bewildering.

There are names for the numerals up to five, then only for “ten” and “one hundred”.

“Mune” and “nklanu” are nouns of the 1st. Class.

“Mune wa banhu”, four of people, i. e. four people.

“Nklanu wa tiyivu”, five sheep.

“Kumi” and “izana” are nouns of the 2nd. Class.

“Kumi ga zilo”, five of things, i. e. five things.

“Izana ga mahaxi”, one hundred horses.

The one, two, and the three commonly follow the noun,

as "Munhu munwe", one person.

"Banhu bambiri", two people, etc.

But they may precede the noun naturally in sentences like the following,

"Tiharu ta leto tiyivu", five of those sheep, etc.

The Ordinals.

Properly speaking there are no ordinal Adjectives. To express "first," it is necessary to make use of the verb "Ranga" to go ahead, i. e. precede, as,

"Munhu wo ranga" The first man.

For the "Second" the numeral takes the plural prefix of the Class to which it refers.

"Siku ga mambiri", the Second day.

"Third" and "Fifth" are like "Second" in their use, but insert "Wu" before the Adjective.

"Ivu ya wu nharu", The third sheep.

"Siku ga wu nkulanu", The fifth day.

"Mune" and "kumi", four and ten, remain unchanged:

"Siku ga mune", The fourth day.

"Hweti ga kumi", The tenth month.

Ordinals beyond the second or third are more often expressed by circumlocution, as "In four days ahead" rather than the "Fourth day."

The native does his counting in fives, which are all the digits he has on one hand, and his other hand affords

another five, so that he has a name for ten; ten tens are as many as the ordinary native will comprehend.

The Adverb.

The only Numeral Adverb is "Kanwe", once.

Twice, thrice, etc. are represented by the numeral adjectives, "times" etc.

"Zikati zinharu", three times etc.

Adverbs of manner are scarce, but are used with much elasticity of thought or range of meaning. "tsi", well, may mean anything from merely "well", on through nicely, gently, slowly, carefully, splendidly, and similar ideas.

"U mahile kwatsi, Nhanyana", you have done well, Maiden.

Adverbs, "yes" and "no" are sparingly used, the negative form of the verb being used for the former.

"U fambile Sewe ke?", Have you been to town?

"A nzi fambangi", I have not been, where in English, one would anticipate a simple "No". In case he has been to town, the answer would be,

"Nzi fambile", I have been, -where in English, "Yes" would be the common form. Should you put it,

"A ku se nga famba Sewe ke?", Have you not yet gone to town?", the native will reply, "Yes, I have not gone", -where in English we should expect "No" etc. He looks upon your positive statement; viz. "You have not yet gone to town", and in his

mind he thinks, "That is so. I am here. I have not yet gone", so he replies, "Yes" etc. Having your statement in mind, rather than the truth you were after.

The Interrogative adverbs "how" and "why" are expressed by "yini", prefixed by "hi", or "ku", or by both together.

"Hi ku yini", or as one word, "hikuyini", literally, "be it why", i. e. why.

"Karini", why, "ku yini", what "karini", which also is the common term for "how", are other alverbs of this sort.

The Adverbial particle "Ke", which is the only interrogative for questions, has no equivalent in English, but is expressed by inflection, - a case in which the aboriginal native is superior to the cultured English.

The "Ke" is not fully enclitic, but is partially so, the accent of the preceeding syllable receiving a partial accent, and the "ke" receiving about the same. This will be easily learned from conversation with a native.

Adverbs of Time.

makunu	olu	now
lezi	olu	when
lokuloku	nukunuku	soon
kale	gale	ago
cima	gima	never
nyamukla	muhuno	to day
agambo	xilambo	evening

mumu	mihani	day time
mixweni	jimindu	morning
atolo	banoba	yesterday [day
atolweni	banyatulo	day before yester-
manziko	jimindu	to-morrow [row
mundlwane	libwakewo	day after to-mor-
makalakaya	makalagaya	winter
maxika	maciga	summer
nyanwaka	mogono	this year
nwecemu	banyamwage	last year
nwakani	nyamwage	next year

Adverbs of Place.

hehla	bacani	above
lahasi	babaci	below
lahandle	babanje	outside
inzeni	ndani	inside
xikari	bakari	between
seyi	kisikeyi	the other side
seno	kisikeno	this side
mahlweni	mbeli	in front
anzako	lwane	behind
laha	aba	here
laho	abo	there
kona	omo	
lahaya	mule	yonder
kule	hwinjo	far
kusuhani	bafubi	near
kaya	gaya	home
asinwini	kurje	in the garden
gobeni	saba	at the spring
muronga	ronga	north
pubocani	pubocani	east
ximande	gimande	west

sika	sigá	south
kokeni	kogani	in the valley
nyakokwe	nyakogwe	on the hill
xinene	nyamugywe	to the right
xibaba	nyambade	to the left

Prepositions, Conjunctions, and Interjections.

Many of the adverbs of Place may be used as Prepositions. When so used they are followed by "ka", as:

"Hehla ka mati", upon the water.

"Anzako ka xitsunga", behind the mountain, etc.

Other Prepositions are, "hi", by, "ka", of, "ni and na", with, and "la and le", at. "Hi", is often used as a neuter pronoun, referring to previous thought though unexpressed, For instance, if it be asked. "Why are you resting in the way", the answer may be, "Hi mumu", it is the heat.

The verb "ku", in the sense of saying, is often used as a conjunction.

"A wona aku, a banhu ba haba", He sees that the people are gone.

Na is used to express the idea of having, or possessing, for which there is no term; "U na ntamo", He has strength.

"A ku na munhu", There is no man, -literally, "not is with man".

"Na", as a preposition, is used with the emphatic pronouns, etc.

"Wa famba na bona", he goes with them. These pronouns do not contract save in the third person,

singular and plural of Personal pronouns with their prefixes.

“Huku yakwe”, His hen, : but not “kuga kakwe”, her food, refering to the hen. It is “kuga ka yona”, the food of her.

“Na” as a conjunction is used adverbially denoting time.

“Na wonile zidlema”, when he saw the multitudes, or seeing the multitudes.

The “a”, in “na”, for euphony may appear as “nu”, or as “ni”.

“Wa laba ku gonza nu ku tsala”, He wishes to read and write.

“Ni yi se ku wona mbyana”, before the dog saw, etc.

Other Conjunctions are,

“kutani”, perhaps, “kumbe”, although, “hilezi”, since.

“kanilezi”, but, “kasi”, in order that, “kala”, until, “kwatsi”, like.

“Ke is the interrogative ordinarily, but.

“Ke” at the close of a sentence, or phrase may mean entreaty, or a mild challenge.

“Maha-ke”, Do it then. “Nzi byela ke”, Tell me then.

Some of the principle Interjections are,

“Nkosi”, (from the Zulu), My lord.

“Nkomo”, Sir, in same sense as above.

“ Bayeti”, a sort of royal salutation.

“I”, disapproval.

“Ha”, astonishment.

“ Satanyoko”, a curse.

There are certain words, which might come under

the Interjection, which express strong feeling, or emotion, which are hardly translatable in English.

They are onamapoetic for the most part and depend on their connection for meaning.

Some of them are,

hwi, bi, dzu, ra, go, nwa, etc.

"A gongonza, go, go", He was knocking, knock knock,.

The Verb.

The Verb nearly always ends in "a", and is of two syllables or more. There are no exceptions, save in enclitics.

Some common enclitics are, "swa", to know, "ku", to say, "nwa", to drink, "ta" come, "fa", to die, "swa", to burn, and "ga", to eat.

In the present indicative, or imperative, these enclitics add "na" to the root, as "tana" come, "nwana", drink. etc.

Classes of Verbs.

Objective Verbs, are formed by changing the final vowel into "eka" It denotes that the action is done for somebody or something.

"Nyika", to give, "nyikela", give for, "Famba", go, fambela", go for, etc.

This form is intensified by adding "etela" in the place of "ela".

"Xenga" entice, tempt, "xengetela", importune, i e. entice strongly.

"Cela", pour, celetela", pour all around, sprinkle,

etc.

“Daya”, kill, “dayela” execute, “dayetela”, massacre.

Neuter Passive Verbs are formed by changing the final vowel to “eka”, which corresponds in English to the ending “able”:

“Wona”, to see, “woneka”, seeable, i. e. appear.

“Maha”, to do, “maheka”, do-able, i. e. possible.

Causative Verbs insert “is” before the final vowel, and are equivalent to “make”, in the English:

“Famba”, go, “Fambisa”, make go, i. e. send.

“Ga”, eat, “gisa” make eat, i. e. feed.

Some verbs ending in “la”, change the “l”, to “t” instead of “si”.

“Tala”, full, “tata”, make full, i. e. fill.

Also “tata” fill, may have “tatisa” i. e. fill it full.

Reciprocal Verbs are formed by inserting “an” before the final vowel. As the name indicates, they denote reciprocal action:

“Ba”, to beat, “bana”, to beat one another, i. e. to fight.

“Ranza”, to love, “ranzana”, to love one another.

Reflective Verbs are formed by inserting “ti” before the root. The action of the verb terminates on the subject:

“Daya” kill, “ti daya” suicide.

“Hanya”, to live, “hanyisa”, save, “ti hanyisa”, save himself.

In any of the forms of the verb, a reduplication of the root or of the ending denotes emphasis, or intensity of meaning:

“Tsekatseka”, flapping of the sail.

“Dingadinga”, a chief’s kraal.
 “Famba”, go, “fambisa” go it lively.

Moods and Tenses.

The only Moods which it is necessary to recognize in this primer, of Sheetswa construction, are the Indicative, Subjunctive, Potential, Imperative and Infinitive. The meanings of these moods are identical with the same in English.

There is no change in the verb to indicate person but every finite verb must have a pronoun or prefix of some noun, which serves to indicate the class of noun, or the pronoun, which is the subject of the verb.

The Indicative.

The Indicative Mood may comprise a number of tenses by aid of various auxiliaries, but the simple tenses herein indicated are sufficient for present uses.

The Present Tense has no Sign, but is formed of the simple root of the verb with its pronoun or prefix for its subject:

“Nzi laba mati”, I want water.

The Present Progressive Tense, sign “i” of the pronoun changed to “a”. This denotes continued, present action:

“Nza laba ku famba”, I am wishing to go.

This form often denotes a future thought, wherein the future would be used in English:

“Wa wa”, you are falling, for you will fall.

The Imperfect Tense, Sign “lo”, “wa”, or “no”, either form admissible. Sign in English “ed” in regular verbs, “was” in irregular.

It denotes indefinite past time:

“Nzi lo famba”, I went.

“Nzi wa famba”, I went.

The Perfect Tense, Sign “ile”, English, “have”. This tense denotes action complete in a past time, as in English; but verbs denoting permanent quality or state of action, are also often in this form, where in English the present would be used:

“Nzi fambile”, I have gone.

“I sasile”, It (has become, therefore) is good.

Verbs ending in “ala”, “ela”, “ana”, often have the perfect in “ele”, “ene”. “Sala”, to remain, “sele”, have remained:

“Eklela, sleep, “eklele”, have slept.

“Hambana”, separate, “Hambene”, have separated.

A few verbs have an irregular perfect.

“Daya”, to kill, “de e”, have killed.

In this instance, the “y” has evidently absorbed the place of “l”, as frequently happens in most of the Bantu dialects.

The Pluperfect Tense, Sign “wa — ile”, English “had”.

This tense denotes action complete before some other past time:

“Nzi wa fambile”, I had gone.

The Future Tense, Sign “ta”, English, “will”. This tense denotes simple futurity in regular in-

stances, but is often used in place of the present as a polite form of the imperative mood:

“Nzi ta famba”, I will go.

“Nzi ku, ba ta famba”, I say, they will go, i. e. “let them go”.

The Future Perfect Tense, Sign “ta nga—ile”, English, “shall have”.

This tense denotes time completed before some other future time.

It also repeats the pronoun or prefix before the verb:

“Nzi ta nga nzi fambile”, I shall have gone.

The Subjunctive Mood.

This mood, as in English, denotes or implies a subjoined condition.

For present use, one tense, the present, is sufficient.

Present Tense, Sign, “loku”, English “if”.

This tense denotes present time only.

Other forms common in English will be found under the Potential mood.

“Loku nzi famba”, if I go.

Another form of the same tense is made by changing the final “a” of the root to “e” and omitting the “loku”. This is common in questions, also in asking favors, as in prayer etc.

“Nzi fambe”, may I go, or let me go.

In the plural, in addition to changing the final vowel to “e”, it annexes the

common sign of the plural, "ni", in addition to the pronoun before the verb.

"A hi fambeni", let us go. This is the common form for the plural.

The Potential Mood.

The Potential Mood, as its name implies, denotes possibility, with modified conditions very much as in English.

Present Tense, Sign, "nga", English "may, can, must":

"Nzi nga "famba", I may go.

Imperfect Tense, Sign, "wa laba", English, "might", etc:

"Nzi wa laba kn famba", I did want to go, i. e. might go.

Another form of expressing the same thought is by the use of "nga" before the present and perfect indicative:

"Nga nzi famba", I would go.

"Loku nzi tsikile nguwo ya mina, nga nzi bilwe hi xirame",

If I had left my blanket I would have felt the cold.

Another form, still, is the imperfect indicative with the auxiliary "ta" inserted before the verb:

"Nzi wa ta famba", I would have gone.

"Kota", and "tiba", are often in used in the sense of "able", which is equivalent to "can"; but this is hardly a potential mood.

“Wa kota ku maha”, He is able to make, i. e. can make.

“Wa tiba ku maha”, He knows to make, i. e. can make.

- N. B. The second person singular is often used for the third person, when there will be no ambiguity; “Wa laba yini”, what do you wish, is altogether the common form, for the second person, and may be equally used for the third, “Wa laba yini”, what does he want.

The Imperative Mood.

The Imperative Mood has one tense, and but the second persons. A third person can be formed indirectly, as “bate”, let them come, but this is more subjunctive than imperative. The imperative second singular is the simple form of the root.

“Famba”, go. “Xaba”, buy, etc.

The plural is formed regularly by adding “ni” to the root.

“Fambani”, go ye. “Xabani”, buy ye.

- N. B. Monosyllabic stems increase the root by annexing “na”.

“Ta”, come, “tana” come thou, “tana-ni”, come ye.

“Zwa”, hear, “zwana”, hear you, “zwana-ni”, hear ye.

The Infinitive Mood, Sign, “ku”, English “to”.

Present tense, "ku famba", to go.

Perfect, "ku fambile", to have gone.

The Participle "nzi ku wona", contracted to "nzo wona", I seeing.

Voices of Verbs.

The forms of the verb used thus far are the regular Active forms. There are also the corresponding forms for the Passive Voice. The Passive Voice is regularly formed by inserting "w" before the final vowel, "Wona", see, "wonwa", seen.

The sign of the passive voice is always "w", but some verbs take "iw" instead of the "w" alone: as "maha", make; "mahiwa", made, "ga", eat, "giwa", eaten.

Some verbs have only the passive form, the active form being expressed by the causative form of the verb: as, "zwa", to hear, "swa", to be young, "nwa", to drink, "wa", to fall.

The Tenses of all the moods form their passives regularly by inserting the "w", or "iw" before the final vowel, as directed for the simple form.

The Negative form of the Verb.

Both Active and Passive verbs have negative forms. These are made up by the use of various auxiliaries:

e. g. "a", "i", or "u", preceeds the personal pronoun,

"nga" preceeds the root of the verb.

"kala" preceeds the infinitive,

"i" or "ngi" is annexed to the root of the verb.

Not all of these are necessary for any one form, but all are necessary to fill all of the forms.

Synopsis of the Negative form of Verbs.

Indicative Mood.

Present tense,	A nzi woni	I do not see.
Imperfect	Nzi lo kala ku wona	I did not see.
Perfect	A nzi wonangi,	I have not seen.
Future	Nzi nga ta wona	I will not see.

Subjunctive Mood.

Present	Loku nzi nga woni,	If I not see.
Imperfect	Loku nzi lo kala ku wona	If I did not see.
Perfect	Loku nzi nga wonangi	If I have not seen.
Future	Loku nzi nga ta woni	If I shall not see.

Potential Mood.

Present	Nzi nga kala ku wona	I may not see.
Imperfect	Nzi lo nzi nga woni	I might not see.
Perfect	Nzi lo nzi nga wonangi	I might not have seen.

Imperative Mood.

Present	U nga woni	see thou not.
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Infinitive Mood.

Present	Ku kala ku wona	Not to see.
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Participle.

Present

Nzi lo kala nzi nga woni, I not seeing.
(contracted usually to "nzo kala", etc.)

Different forms of moods and tenses can be made by a judicious use of these various auxiliaries, but they are perplexing for beginners and are therefore omitted here.

The use of the various pronouns, subjects of verbs etc. vary somewhat in their use without any special reason. One may use "a," "i", or even "u" as a subject of a verb, with nothing but the sound of the phrase or sentence to determine which, with no difference in the meaning.

Paradigm of the Verb.

Indicative Mood.

Present

nzi wona
u wona
a wona
hi wona
mu wona
ba wona

I see
thou seest
he sees
we see
you see
they see.

Progressive

nza wona
wa wona
a wona
ha wona
ma wona
ba wona

I am seeing.
you are seeing
he is seeing
we are seeing
you are seeing
they are seeing.

Imperfect

nzi lo wona
u lo wona
i lo wona
hi lo wona
mu lo wona
ba lo wona

I saw
you saw
he saw
we saw
you saw
they saw.

Perfect	nzi wonile u wonile i wonile hi wonile mu wonile ba wonile	I have seen you have seen he has seen we have seen you have seen they have seen.
Pluperfect	nzi lo wonile u lo wonile i lo wonile hi lo wonile mu lo wonile ba lo wonile.	I had seen you had seen he had seen we had seen you had seen they had seen.
Future	nzi ta wona u ta wona i ta wona hi ta wona mu ta wona ba ta wona	I shall see you will see he will see we shall see you will see they will see.
Future Perfect	nzi ta nga nzi wonile u ta nga u wonile a ta nga a wonile hi ta nga hi wonile mu ta nga mu wonile ba ta nga ba wonile	I shall have gone you will have gone he will have gone we shall have gone you will have gone they will have gone.

Subjunctive Mood.

Present	loku nzi wona If I see loku wa wona if you see loku a wona if he sees
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loku hi	wona	if we see
lokn mu	wona	if you see
loku ba	wona	if they see.

Present

nzi	wone	let me see
u	wone	let you see
a	wone	let him see
a	hi woneni	let us see
a	mu woneni	let you see
a	ba woneni	let them see.

Imperfect

loku nzi	lo wona	if I saw
loku u	lo wona	if you saw
loku i	lo wona	if he saw
loku hi	lo wona	if we saw
loku mu	lo wona	if you saw
loku ba	lo wona	if they saw.

Perfect

loku nzi	wonile	if I have seen
loku u	wonile	if you have seen
loku hi	wonile	if we have seen
loku mu	wonile	if you have seen
loku ba	wonile	if they have seen.

Future

loku nzi	ta wona	if I shall see
loku u	ta wona	if you shall see
loku i	ta wona	if he shall see
loku hi	ta wona	if we shall see
loku mu	ta wona	if you shall see
loku ba	ta wona	if they shall see.

Potential Mood.

Present

nzi	nga wona	I may see
u	nga wona	you may see
a	nga wona	he may see
hi	nga wona	we may see
mu	nga wona	you may see
ba	nga wona	they may see.

Imperfect

nga nzi wona	I would see
nga ku wona	you would see
nga a wona	he would see
nga hi wona	we would see
nga mu wona	you would see
nga ba wona	they would see.

Perfect

nga nzi wonile	I would have seen
nga ku wonile	you would have seen
nga i wonile	he would have seen
nga hi wonile	we would have seen
nga mu wonile	you would have seen
nga ba wonile	they would have seen.

Infinitive Mood.

Present

ku wona	to see.
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Imperative Mood.

Present

wona	see you
wonani	see ye

Participle.

Present

nzo wona	I seeing.
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N B.

The “nga” which may occur in the Potential, and the “nzo” in the Participle, are contractions, the former for “nga ku” and the latter for “nzi ku”.

The Negative Form.

Indicative Mood.

Present

a nzi woni	I do not see
a ku woni	you do not see
a nga woni	he does not see
a hi woni	we do not see
a mu woni	you do not see

	ba nga woni	they do not see.
Imperfect	nzi lo kala ku wona	I did not see
	u lo kala ku wona	you did not see
	i lo kala ku wona	he did not see
	hi lo kala ku wona	we did not see
	mu lo kala ku wona	you did not see
	ba lo kala ku wona	they did not see.
Perfect	a nzi wonangi	I have not seen
	a ku wonangi	you have not seen
	a nga wonangi	he has not seen
	hi nga wonangi	we have not seen
	mu nga wonangi	you have not seen
	ba nga wonangi	they have not seen.
Future	nzi nga ta wona	I will not see
	u nga ta wona	you will not see
	i nga ta wona	he will not see
	hi nga ta wona	we will not see
	mu nga ta wona	you will not see
	ba nga ta wona	they will not see.

Subjunctive Mood.

Present	loku nzi nga woni	if I see not
	loku u nga woni	if you see not
	loku a nga woni	if he sees not
	loku hi nga woni	if we see not
	loku mu nga woni	if you see not
	loku ba nga woni	if they see not.
Present	nzi nga kala ku wona	I may not see
	u nga kala ku wona	you may not see
	a nga kala ku wona	he may not see
	hi nga kala ku wona	we may not see
	mu nga kala ku wona	you may not see
	ba nga kala ku wona	they may not see.

Imperfect	nga nzi nga woni	I might not see
	nga ku nga woni	you might not see
	nga a nga woni	he might not see
	nga hi nga woni	we might not see
	nga mu nga woni	you might not see
	nga ba nga woni	they might not see.

Perfect	nga nzi nga wonangi	I might not have seen
	nga u nga wonangi	you might not have seen
	nga a nga wonangi	he might not have seen
	nga hi nga wonangi	we might not have seen
	nga mu nga wonangi	you might not have seen
	nga ba nga wonangi	they might not have seen.

Imperative Mood.

Present	u nga woni	see not thou
	mu nga woni	see not ye.

Infinitive Mood.

Present	ku kala ku wona	not to see.
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Participle.

Present	nzi ku kala nzi nga woni	I not seeing.
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The Passive Voice is formed regularly according to directions given on page 26.

The Relative form has already been noticed on Page 10. It will not be necessary to burden these pages with paradigms, since the variations are only slight and quite regular.

Auxiliary Verbs.

- (1) There is no verb "to be" in the Sheetswa language; however, as seen in the paradigms there are particles which assist in filling the deficiency, such as "lo", "wa", "nga", etc.
- (2) The adverb "kona" is much used in lieu of the verb "to be":
 "U kona munhu", there is a man.
 "Ku wa hi kona munhu", there was a man.
- (3) Many verbs expressing the quality of a noun require no copula:
 "Munhu wo saseka", the man is good.
- (4) "Maha", make, is often used in place of "to be":
 "Nza laba ku maha mulungu", I wish to become a white man.
 "Zwa", feel, may take the place of "to be":
 "Nza-zwa xirame", I am cold.
- (5) "Ha", whenever used, denotes the action as not yet complete, i e, still going on, and may be translated as "yet":
 "Nza ha wona", I yet see.
- (6) "Kari" before the perfect tense, has the sense of "about" or "going":
 "Nzi wa kari nzi wonile": I was about to see.
- (7) "Se" is used with negative form in the sense of "yet":
 "An nzi se ku famba", I have not yet gone.
 With "na" it is used as a conjunctive adverb equivalent to "before":
 "Hi fambile na nga se ku cikela mulungu",
 We went before the white man came.
- (8) "Lo", "ku", and "su" are verbs of saying, and are used in the present and imperfect tenses:

Present	nzi nga lo,	nzi ku,	nzi su,	I say
	u nga lo,	u ku,	u su,	you say
	i nga lo,	a ku,	a su,	he says
	hi nga lo,	hi ku,	hi su,	we say
	mu nga lo,	mu ku,	mu su,	you say
	ba nga lo,	ba ku,	ba su,	they say.

Imperfect	nzi te nga lo,	nzi wa ku,	I said
	u te nga lo,	u wa ku,	you said
	i te nga lo,	i wa ku,	he said
	hi te nga lo,	hi wa ku,	we said
	mu te nga lo,	mu wa ku,	you said
	ba te nga lo,	ba wa ku,	they said.

- (9) "ta", the regular auxiliary for the future tense, is a true verb and may be used complete in all the moods and tenses.



